

Holy Cross Students Sell Artwork to Purchase Warm Items for Children Who Are Homeless or in Foster Care

Dover, Delaware-January 2019 – The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) and its community partners, are pleased to report that the Heart 2 Heart Hugs campaign has now begun. Heart 2 Heart Hugs is focused on providing warmth, comfort, hugs and smiles for kids and young adults in Delaware who are homeless or in foster care. Donations of "hugs" (to include new or handmade coats, blankets, scarves, gloves, fleece items, monetary donations and more) will continue until February 2019 for this year's effort.



The GACEC recently received a monetary donation to purchase new items from two Holy Cross students. The students, Savannah and Hunter Strauss, sold artwork that they created and donated the money earned to Heart 2 Heart Hugs warm clothing drive. This is the fourth year that the children have made a donation from selling handmade arts and crafts during their holiday break. Savannah and Hunter collected nearly \$300 this year by selling original art work. So many lives will be affected by this donation, and children will feel cared about.

Masonic Lodge #7 here in Dover recently made a generous donation of 50 coats and various other warm items, including hats, glove and scarves. The lodge collected donations and

presented them to Executive Directory Wendy Strauss in late December. "We are so appreciative of their efforts to make a difference in the life of a child" shared GACEC Executive Directory Wendy Strauss.

Statistics from the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) show that in the 2017-18 school year, there were 21,168 students receiving special education services. Roughly one third of those students are homeless or in foster care. Homelessness impacts children and the State of Delaware in many ways. Health issues, food security and educational proficiency are areas that the report uses to show how great the needs are for children who are homeless. Wendy Strauss, executive director of the GACEC stated that "...this project connects hearts and collects hugs for our children in foster care and for our children who are homeless. Programs like this let our children know that we are thinking about them and we care for them."

Drop-off points are located throughout the state and may be found on the homepage of the GACEC at <http://gacec.delaware.gov>. Contact the GACEC at (302) 739-4553 or Sybil Brown, GACEC Administrative Coordinator Sybil.brown@gacec.k12.de.us for additional information.